GUIDE TO THE NR4 PLATEAU INDIANS FILE

[This file attempts to delineate a rather complex cultural area located geographically in northwestern United States and southwestern Canada, between the Rocky Mountains on the east and the Cascade Mountains on the west. The northern boundary is roughly the great bend of the Fraser River, while to the south this plateau region merges with the Colorado Plateau. To designate clearly the cultural or tribal units that constitute this file is and will continue to be a problem of some magnitude for ethnographers. For purposes of functional expediency the Plateau area as outlined by Kroeber in his Cultural and Natural Areas of Native North America is the one used here, with additions and modifications by Verne F. Ray, an ethnologist, whose writings on the region make up the major bulk of this file. Kroeber speaks of the Plateau region as being composed of three separate geographical areas: (1) the Middle Columbia, composed of the various Sahaptin-speaking tribes, (2) the Upper Columbia, composed of most of the interior Salish-speaking groups from Methow and Okanagon to Flathead, and the Kitunahan-speaking Kutenai, and (3) the Fraser, composed of the Lillooet, Thompson, Shuswap, Athab, Nicola, Chilcotin and possibly the Carrier. Linguistically the Plateau Indians may be classified as follows: (1) the Salish-speakers, the Shuswap, Lillooet, Thompson, Lake, Kalispel, Coeur d'Alene, Spokanes, Colville, Nespelem, Southern Okanagon, Methow, Chelan, Wenatchi and Columbia, (2) the Sahaptin-speakers, the Kittitas, Yakima, Klikitat, Wayampam, Umatilla, Cayuse, Wauyukma, Palus, New Perce, Tenino and Molala, (3) the Athabascan-speakers, the Chilcotin, Carriers, Sekani and Nicola, and (4) the Kitunahan-speakers, the Kutenai. Although cultural subdivisions of the Plateau Indians cannot be indicated with the finesse possible for dialect groups, Ray has nevertheless suggested the following divisions: (1) the Lakes, (2) the Central Interior Salish (Colville, Lower Spokane, Sanpoil, Nespelem, Southern Okanagon and Columbia), (3) the Cascade

Interior Salish (Methow, Chelan, and Wenatchi), (4) the Northeastern Interior Salish (Kalispel, Chewelah, Coeur d'Alene, Upper Spokane, and Middle Spokane), (5) the Northwestern Sahaptins (Kittitas, Yakima, Wayampam, and Wanapam), and (6) the Northeastern Sahaptins (Umatilla, Walula, Palus and Cayuse).

The file consists of four English-language sources numbered as sources 1, and 3-5. Sources 1: Ray, 3: Ray and 4: Ray et al., all written by professional anthropologists, and rated as "5" (excellent primary data), generally deal with cultural trait distribution throughout the Plateau area, a factor dictated by the nature of the OWC unit itself (i.e., NR4 Plateau Indians). 1: Ray discusses the distribution and history of the social, religious and material aspects of the culture. 3: Ray deals with village locations and territorial distribution of Salish and Sahaptin-speaking peoples in the Columbia River Basin around the year 1850. Additional information may also be found here on political organization and the hunting and gathering cycles. 4: Ray et al. is composed of the writings of several ethnographers presenting summaries of information on locations and migrations prior to and following White contact. 5: Bancroft, written by a well-known historian, presents general ethnographic information on the Salish and Sahaptin-speaking groups of the Plateau Indians at the time of first Indian-White contact, as gathered from the works of earlier writers. The source is exceptionally well documented as to sources of information used by Bancroft. This source is rated as "4" (excellent secondary data). The file was processed in 1953-1954.]